



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, May 28, 2014****Members Present**

Hon. Glen Abernethy, Hon. Tom Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Blake, Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Dolynny, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Hawkins, Hon. Jackie Jacobson, Hon. Jackson Lafferty, Hon. Bob McLeod, Hon. Robert McLeod, Mr. Menicoche, Hon. Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Moses, Mr. Nadli, Hon. David Ramsay, Mr. Yakeleya

The House met at 1:33 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back, colleagues, as we reconvene the Fifth Session of the 17th Legislative Assembly.

It finally looks like spring has come to the Northwest Territories. I know we have all been very busy since the House adjourned in March, but I hope you were able to spend some time with family and friends, to get out on the land and maybe even take part in a spring hunt.

This spring is of particular importance to the Northwest Territories for another reason. April 1st marked the long-awaited transfer of the authority to govern our land and water resources from the Government of Canada to the Government of the Northwest Territories. We begin a new era for our territory and our government.

As part of that process, I am pleased to advise this House that I have been informed by Madame Clerk that the Honourable George L. Tuccaro, Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, assented to the following bills on March 26, 2014:

- Bill 1, Reindeer Act;
- Bill 2, Archaeological Sites Act;
- Bill 3, Surface Rights Board Act;
- Bill 10, Northwest Territories Lands Act;
- Bill 11, Petroleum Resources Act;
- Bill 13, Devolution Measures Act;
- Bill 14, Waters Act;
- Bill 15, Oil and Gas Operations Act;
- Bill 16, NWT Intergovernmental Agreement on Lands and Resources Management Act; and
- Bill 17, NWT Intergovernmental Resource Revenue Sharing Agreement Act.

Colleagues, I would also like to take a moment to acknowledge two of our territory's greatest assets: our elders and our youth.

First, I had the pleasure of hosting the third Elders Parliament, which took place here at the Assembly from May 5th to 9th. Elders from across the territory met in the capital and shared their experiences, their stories and their concerns. Our elders were eager to tackle the big issues of the day and provided much food for thought. In spite of the serious work that was done, I have to say that our hallways and committee rooms also rang with laughter. There may be a lesson there for us.

Thank you to the participants for contributing to such a meaningful event, to our sponsors for assisting us, to the staff for organizing the event and to those Members who also participated. I hope the elders enjoyed the event as much as I did.

Moving on to the youth, please join me in welcoming our Pages for this sitting of the Assembly. It is always a pleasure to have them in the House. We have students from Sachs Harbour, Wekweeti and Yellowknife joining us during the next two weeks.

Colleagues, it is now my duty to advise the House that I have received the following message from the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. It reads:

"Dear Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise that I recommend to the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories, the passage of

- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2014-2015

- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditure), No. 1, 2014-2015
- during the Fifth Session of the 17th Legislative Assembly.

Yours truly, George L. Tuccaro, Commissioner."

Thank you, colleagues.

Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 65-17(5): SESSIONAL STATEMENT

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome Members back to the continuation of the Fifth Session of the 17th Legislative Assembly.

This is our first session since the transfer of authority for public land, water and resources from the Government of Canada to the Government of the Northwest Territories. Devolution was the most significant development in the political evolution of the Northwest Territories since division, and I want to again thank Members for their support and participation in making this long-held goal a reality. We will continue to look to Members for support and input as we implement devolution. This includes a review of legislation already underway that will give all stakeholders the opportunity to provide input into how our territory will refine its regulatory regime and land and resource management system.

Devolution is a work in progress, Mr. Speaker; it was not a one-time event. Devolution has given this government and this Assembly new powers and created new opportunities for us to partner with Aboriginal governments on protecting our environment, managing our land and responsibly developing our resources. We will continue to refine and improve the way we use those powers and work with our partners to create a brighter future for all our residents.

Our partnership grew earlier this week, when I was pleased to welcome three more signatories to the Devolution Agreement: the Acho Dene Koe First Nation and Fort Liard Metis Local No. 67, Salt River First Nation and Deninu Kue First Nation. These are the first Aboriginal community governments to become parties to the Devolution Agreement. They join the five regional Aboriginal governments that had already signed on: the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, NWT Metis Nation, Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated, Gwich'in Tribal Council and Tlicho Government.

Our government is committed to ensuring all the people of the Northwest Territories benefit from devolution. As the public government for all the people of the Northwest Territories, we have the primary responsibility for ensuring that devolution has a positive impact on all residents and communities in the territory. But ours is not the only government that has a role to play.

From the start, the participation of Aboriginal governments as our partners was a priority. As large land owners in this territory and holders of unique constitutional rights, it was important to have their involvement in negotiations and planning. It

will be equally important to have their partnership as we implement devolution.

That is why we are establishing the Intergovernmental Council, where all participating governments will have an opportunity to identify and work together on common interests relating to the management of northern land, water and resources. That is why we have agreed to share a quarter of the new revenues we will receive from resource development with participating Aboriginal governments.

Devolution has the potential to create a strong, prosperous territory, Mr. Speaker, one that provides opportunities for its residents to succeed and supports those who need our help. We can better realize our vision of that territory when capable, well-resourced governments are working together, sharing a common understanding of, and commitment to, the best interests of all our people.

Our government has committed to keeping a seat at the table for all Aboriginal governments that want to participate in devolution. We understand that they have their own priorities and respect the independent decisions of each of them. But we do continue to engage with all remaining Aboriginal governments in the spirit of respect, recognition and responsibility to find ways that they can participate. Sometimes that means a new approach, as we have taken with the communities that signed on this week. I remain hopeful that we will eventually see full participation, and we will continue to work towards this goal.

This government committed to a smooth transfer of responsibilities, Mr. Speaker, and we have achieved that. With the help of the Government of Canada and our Aboriginal government partners and the hard work of our staff, we were ready for business when doors opened on April 1st. That day, we welcomed 132 former federal employees to our government, many joining our new Department of Lands, where their knowledge, experience and commitment to the public service is greatly appreciated. The Department of Lands plays an important role in administering public land in the Northwest Territories, land use planning and sustainability and coordinating our government's review of development proposals.

Responsibilities for mineral and petroleum management have been assumed by Industry, Tourism and Investment. The new NWT mining registrar registered its first mineral claim, the first claims registered under territorial, not federal, legislation, on April 1st. The oil and gas regulator is processing applications from operators in a timely fashion and moved quickly to inspect Strategic Oil's Cameron Hills operation, finding everything in order. Staffing of the petroleum resources division in Inuvik has been very successful, and we will be

moving to initiate a call for bids in the very near future.

Environment and Natural Resources has also taken on its new responsibilities for managing water and cumulative impacts monitoring. During April, Minister Miltenberger approved two amended Type A water licences, demonstrating our capacity for undertaking new responsibilities in a thorough and timely fashion.

Mirroring existing federal legislation governing land, water and resources in the Northwest Territories was an important part of having a smooth transfer. That did mean that several pieces of devolution legislation were enacted by this House without the usual opportunity to hold public meetings on the bills. We appreciated the agreement of the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning to let these bills move quickly through the system so we could meet our target effective date of April 1st.

At the time, I committed to undertake a public review of devolution legislation, and I am pleased to advise that we have begun this review. Beginning last week, a new section of our devolution website was launched that will help Northwest Territories residents to better understand the new devolution legislation and give them the opportunity to ask questions and share their views about it.

Links to all the new devolution acts and regulations are available on the site and there is an explanation of the legislative process and how the devolution legislation was developed. There is a form for asking questions, and all questions and answers will be posted to the site.

The review will run for the next three months and will be promoted throughout the territory. In the fall we will report back to the Assembly and the public on what we have heard. While we do not anticipate immediate changes to the framework of devolution legislation that we have just established, our government will use the feedback to inform decisions as we implement devolution and consider options for future improvements.

Mr. Speaker, one of the other benefits of devolution is consolidating the Northwest Territories' position within Confederation. The prosperity that can and will flow from the responsible development of Northwest Territories resources will not only benefit our residents, it will also create new economic opportunities for the rest of Canada and make ours a "have" jurisdiction contributing to national wealth. Politically, acquiring province-like responsibilities and powers puts this territory on a more equal footing with other jurisdictions and positions us to play a more prominent and active role on the national and even international scene.

Nationally, our leadership role was already growing: Minister McLeod chaired last summer's meeting of Canada's Housing Ministers and Minister Ramsay

co-chaired the annual Energy and Mines Ministers Conference. Minister Lafferty is also leading work on Aboriginal educational achievement on behalf of the country's Education Ministers.

We look forward to continuing to increase our national profile and role. Earlier this month I attended a meeting of the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group in Winnipeg. This important group was established by Canada's Premiers and includes the leaders of the five national Aboriginal organizations. Together we work to address issues of importance to Canada's Aboriginal peoples. Following the next annual meeting of Canada's Premiers in August, I will assume the chair of this group on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

I believe other jurisdictions can learn from the respectful government-to-government approach to Aboriginal relations that we have developed in the Northwest Territories. I look forward to working with this group over the next two years and hosting them here in the North, where they can see first-hand the positive effects of the partnership approach we have pioneered.

Later next month I will have the honour of co-hosting meetings of Canada's federal, provincial and territorial Ministers responsible for the Status of Women with Minister Kellie Leitch. This will be an important opportunity to share our experience dealing with issues like violence against women and women in resource extraction, an area in which the Northwest Territories is a leader.

This summer I am also looking forward to representing the people of the Northwest Territories at the Western Premiers Conference and the annual meeting of the Council of the Federation.

Internationally, Minister Ramsay will be assuming the presidency of PNWER, the Pacific Northwest Economic Region. This group works to promote regional collaboration and enhance competitiveness in international and domestic markets. Participation in this forum is a continued opportunity to promote the Northwest Territories and its economic interests.

This summer will also see Inuvik playing host to the Inuit Circumpolar Council's 12th General Assembly. This event takes place every four years and brings together Inuit from Alaska, Canada, Greenland and Russia to discuss Arctic issues and address developments affecting the Inuit world.

The timing of the ICC General Assembly during Canada's chairmanship of the Arctic Council underlines the increasing importance of the Arctic. There is great potential in the North, particularly for resource development. As the world's eyes turn in our direction, we have to ensure that development is sustainable, respects traditional lifestyles and manages the risks associated with challenges like

climate change and increased traffic and activity in Arctic waters. Our government is working closely with Canada to promote Northwest Territories interests during its chairmanship, and we have been pleased to host a number of Arctic Council meetings already.

Mr. Speaker, I have said many times that the future belongs to the Northwest Territories. Devolution has put us on the path. With new responsibilities and a growing role nationally and internationally, we are ready to make our mark. It will take work and cooperation to turn northern potential into prosperity for our people and communities. We cannot take our advantages for granted or sit back and let others do the work and lead the way. We need to make prosperity happen; we cannot just "let" it happen.

Our government has a balanced agenda focused on people, the environment and the economy. We will create opportunities for our people and ensure they have the support they need to take advantage of them with initiatives like Early Childhood Development, the Anti-Poverty Strategy, the Mental Health and Addictions Framework and Education Reform. We will manage and protect our environment according to northern priorities and values with plans like the Land Use and Sustainability Framework, Water Strategy and Energy Conservation and Alternative Energy initiatives. We will promote the long-term growth and stability of our economy with investments in transportation and communications infrastructure and plans like the Economic Opportunities Strategy, NWT Power System Plan and Mineral Development Strategy.

Now is the time for Northerners to join together and decide together what kind of territory we want this to be, how we want to support our people, manage our environment and grow our economy. Putting Northerners in charge of the decisions that affect them was the purpose of devolution. We have made a good start in the past two months and I am pleased that partners continue to come to the table. Our government is committed to continuing to work diligently to advance a dynamic agenda on behalf of the people of this territory. We will not be resting on our laurels or slowing down in our remaining months. I look forward to working with our partners and with Members on fulfilling the promise of devolution together and creating a strong North where individuals, families and communities share in the benefits and responsibilities of a unified, environmentally sustainable and prosperous Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GNWT MEDICAL TRAVEL POLICY ESCORT PROVISIONS

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some serious concerns about the medical travel escort system that our government has in place. Clearly, it is not working. We have medical patients who are travelling whose request for escorts are being denied by this government.

I have spoken to this issue in the past and I've brought it to the Minister's attention and heard promises to make changes. Today I'm speaking for my riding and other people in the Northwest Territories.

We need to get the system right and make our patients comfortable while they are away from home, while they are undergoing surgery and other medical issues that would be less stressful to manage if they have an escort.

Right now I have a constituent who is in Edmonton undergoing chemotherapy for the next four weeks. My constituent has a letter from her doctors, stating that she requires an escort. She was ready to travel from her home community. Days before going to Edmonton, she was told that her escort was denied by medical travel.

This news was shocking, disturbing and emotionally traumatizing for my constituent. She is a very young lady, unsure of how chemotherapy will affect her body, and depressed over the fact that she will be away from her home for four weeks.

We need to do more for our people. We are continually asking for help from the Minister, pleading for our people and wanting to reassure them that we are doing the best to represent their needs.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions later today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. Colleagues, before we go on today, I'd like to welcome back into the House a former Speaker and former colleague, Mr. Tony Whitford. Welcome back to the House, Tony.

Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INCREASING FUEL PRICES IN REMOTE COMMUNITIES

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is only getting more expensive to live and work in our remote communities in the Northwest Territories. Fuel prices are the main driver of the cost of living. Many of our remote communities, like Trout Lake and Nahanni Butte, are supplied with fuel through the petroleum

products division of the Department of Public Works. They have once again increased the fuel prices.

Elders in my riding tell me they are very concerned about the most recent increase in the fuel prices. Most elders are on a fixed income, and fuel prices have a direct impact on the quality of life. They love getting out on the land with their boats and quads; they also need to heat their homes, along with all constituents.

The situation of higher and higher fuel prices is unacceptable. The government must find ways to reduce the cost of fuel to our small and remote communities. Small communities should not be penalized because of their remoteness.

Earlier this month elders from across the Northwest Territories stood in this House and voiced their real concerns about the cost of living and the quality of life of the people of the Northwest Territories. Many elders are caring for grandchildren that do not receive financial support that foster parents do. Increases to the cost of living affect their ability to provide for themselves and for children. The government should immediately commit to reviewing subsidies like the Seniors Fuel Subsidy program every time there's a rate increase and seek ways to reduce prices. Seniors in our communities get asked for a lot of things: vehicle use, money, time, food and shelter. We simply must bear the reality of small community residents in mind when prices go up. We need to invest in alternative energy projects that make a real difference in our communities and have a noticeable impact on the cost of living and even return to the bargaining of fuels for those on the Mackenzie River.

Our people know about living off the land. Communities in the Deh Cho have good conditions for small scale agriculture as well as leading technologies like solar energy. We need to combine traditional knowledge with the modern world to make a difference in the North, and in the meantime, I urge the government to stabilize energy costs in the remote and small communities before we think of ourselves and our people. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COMMUNITY SOLIDARITY DURING TIMES OF LOSS

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also want to join you in welcoming back the Members from a good spring and from a good spring hunt if you went out and did some spring hunting and come back to work. I want to use this Member's statement, as I did in my last sessional statement,

to offer my condolences on behalf of the Sahtu region to all people who have felt loss in their communities of their loved ones. From time to time, as I said in my last statement, we get so busy with our jobs and as we do many things in our small communities, especially when we have close relationships with our family members, it gets pretty hard when a person leaves us.

Like my father-in-law has said, when the good Lord wants you, then the Lord will take you no matter what you do. It leaves us in our communities with a sadness of a loved person leaving our community and the impact it has on our lives.

The beautiful thing in all the Northwest Territories, we even see it in larger centres, is that people pull together, strangers pull together no matter what and offer condolences to the families, to the grandparents or aunties or uncles, but people come together. That's the beauty of the humanity of the people of the Northwest Territories. I should say that in small communities, because it's more intimate, that we put aside our differences for the day for the family and we support the family.

That's what I wanted to say, how much the people of the Sahtu have done this in their communities, in Colville Lake, Fort Good Hope, Norman Wells, Deline and Tulita. Even the community in Tuktoyaktuk, or here in Yellowknife, people in the Deh Cho, the Beaufort-Delta, Akaitcho, right down the valley people pull together in hard times and I want to say how important it is to teach those types of traditions and values to our children.

I wanted to say and offer to the families who've lost loved ones since the last time we had a sitting, and I'll get back to business tomorrow on the Sahtu needs. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FUNDING FOR YELLOWKNIFE EDUCATION AUTHORITIES

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yellowknife Education Districts 1 and 2 are not receiving the funding or support they need to deliver the education that the students of Yellowknife deserve. The edict requiring that pre-kindergarten be delivered by Yellowknife authorities without being funded by ECE places an unfair burden on the budgets of these two districts. It lessens the quality of the education they can provide to the students of Yellowknife. Already teachers are being laid off and student-to-teacher ratios are increasing.

A service previously provided by local daycares and schools on a user pay basis must now be funded from strained budgets with no plans for recovery in the coming years. It is another case of this

government robbing Peter to pay Paul. We fund competing priorities through a merry-go-round of cuts.

Teachers' pensions are another case of failure. The teachers of Yellowknife deserve the same pension plans as other teachers across the NWT, yet the Minister refuses to provide the GNWT's fair share of money, according to his formula, as required by their funding formula of 80 percent GNWT to 20 percent taxpayers of Yellowknife, a formula, again, that the Minister claims to subscribe to. The work of teachers across the Territories through ECE should be equal, but apparently in the eyes of the government some teachers are more equal than others.

If the GNWT is serious about attracting families to the Northwest Territories from southern Canada, or retaining them, they must provide quality education everywhere in the Territories, including Yellowknife. If the GNWT wants to add programs that they feel need to be offered in all territorial schools, such as pre-kindergarten, they must fully fund them in all territorial schools. If the GNWT wants to attract and keep qualified and gifted teachers to work for its largest school districts, it must make sure that the terms of employment are attractive.

To download these financial responsibilities to the Yellowknife school boards and the taxpayers of Yellowknife completely is unfair and short-sighted and against policy. Support for all of the school boards in the North is essential and should not be done at the expense of or on the backs of students in Yellowknife. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ADJUSTMENTS TO NORTHERN LIVING ALLOWANCES

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On March 27, 2014, employees who are members of the Union of Northern Workers received a notice regarding the 2014-2015 northern living allowance rates that were going to be implemented on April 1st. In that message that they got the notice there was a link showing which communities increased and which ones decreased. As a result, we had numerous communities across the Northwest Territories who are employees of the GNWT decrease in the amount of northern living allowance, one of them being my community of Inuvik. Employees ended up losing about \$383 at the end of the day when these negotiations happened. Now, that might not seem a lot when you compare it to other communities such as Aklavik or Tuktoyaktuk, which decreased by about \$2,600, but that \$383 in the community of Inuvik when fuel costs are going high, gas prices are very high, electricity costs are going up, child daycare

has just increased in our Children's First Centre, that \$383 does play a big difference.

The way the northern living allowance is calculated is based on two components, and that's transportation and the cost of living. However, in the NWT Public Service Act, under Section 41.(7), it states that it prohibits the GNWT from negotiating terms in the Collective Agreement which deal directly or indirectly with payments to employees relating to owner occupied or rent or leased premises, and it includes utilities such as fuel, electricity, water, rent and mortgage. Anybody that lives up in the Beaufort-Delta knows that there is a high cost of living, and once this notice came out we did get a lot of e-mails sent to my office, a lot of phone calls in regards to why is this happening when we know that we have a high increase in the natural gas.

We are working on an Anti-Poverty Strategy here with the 17th Legislative Assembly, and when we decrease the northern living allowance for people across the Northwest Territories, it just goes against the fact that we're trying to keep people over that poverty line.

I will have questions today for the Minister of Human Resources and talk about how we can mitigate this, how we can change it, what actions do we need to take as a government. I just want to say the good thing is that these northern living allowance rates are updated and negotiated annually, and I think that we need to make those changes now so that in future we don't have to deal with these kinds of situations.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. The Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ADVERTISING GNWT EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some months ago we had discussions in this House about changes in the way GNWT jobs were advertised. As of October 1, 2013, the Department of Human Resources stopped putting individual job ads or listings in print media publications. Instead, they opted for a half-page or larger ad promoting the GNWT as an employer. The substance of the ad told people to go online, go to the HR website and look there for available jobs in our public service. This change was touted as an improvement in how we advertise for GNWT jobs, a way to reach most job seekers and so on. But recently I have noticed a change in the way that GNWT jobs are being advertised, at least in our northern newspapers. Let me give a few examples.

The Northern Journal, Tuesday, April 18: four job-specific ads for an air attack officer, regional environmental coordinator, water resources officer

and apprenticeship plumber. News/North April 28th, the usual big ad "Come Work with Us" and job-specific ads for information system coordinator and finance officer Liquor Commission. Again, in News/North May 26th, a specific ad for an area manager of Public Works and Services, Fort Simpson.

Why the change? Is this one step forward, two steps back? The Minister of Human Resources vigorously defended the department's change from specific job ads to the one generic ad urging applicants to make their applications online. Admittedly, the concerns of MLAs were considered, but what I heard in the responses from the Minister was: "Thanks, but you have nothing to worry about. It's all good. This is an improvement." To be fair, Members were advised that residents unable to access the job site online would have access to available jobs through postings in their community.

But now I see us doing twice the advertising it seems. In most newspapers there is both the generic apply online ad and several position-specific ads, and that seems like a waste of taxpayers' dollars to me. There are few enough of those available to us and we shouldn't be wasting them. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
PUBLIC NOTIFICATION OF INMATES
UNLAWFULLY AT LARGE

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just before lunch today I received a call from a lady, and she called to thank me for being very vocal on a number of important issues. She, like many others, felt very disappointed that the justice system has personally let her down by their recent demonstration of their lack of leadership in a system that would rather keep people in the dark than by doing their job by informing the public when an inmate is at large.

She told me, knowing that a prisoner was at large in Yellowknife for seven days made her feel, as a woman, very vulnerable and questioned who was worrying about her. I couldn't answer that question. She wondered, like many others were wondering: was the inmate's privacy way more important than hers? I couldn't answer that question either.

I wish I could say this was the only conversation I've had on this topic, but the fact is it isn't. The Minister keeping the public in the dark to avoid embarrassment is all the public saw, and that's what I believe took place. People want to know: when does the public interest start to matter over an escaped inmate's interest?

So, while the Minister is doing who knows what, citizens are asking me and telling me that they're

very uneasy about this situation. But it's easy to keep the public in the dark, pretend it never happened, point fingers at the RCMP and say it's not our job, it's theirs to tell the public. What's even more disturbing is it's treated as if it's not serious.

What type of offender are we talking about? Well, let's highlight some of this stuff off the public record: impaired operation of a motor vehicle, dangerous operation of a vehicle. What about uttering threats to an RCMP constable? Failure to stop at the scene of an accident. There are more uttering threats to another individual. There are assault charges. There is unlawfully being in a dwelling. Oh my goodness, there's another wilful obstruction of the RCMP and even conveying more threats to more RCMP constables. Oh, and I should make sure I mention, apparently being at large wasn't his first time; he's also had another charge at being at large unlawfully. So there is a bit of a history here.

When does it matter to inform the public? I'm standing with the public because I believe the public's interest has certainly been denied. Offenders' rights seem to matter more to this government, not the public. Keeping the public in the dark was a choice; it was definitely a choice. In the end were we just protecting the public's interest? I don't think so. We were protecting the Minister and the offender's interest.

All I'm going to say is that I'd rather see that the inmate's privacy rights were waived in this regard and the public shown that they matter more, because I stand with them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
WILD MUSHROOMS HARVEST REGULATION

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. We need legislation to manage the commercial use of non-timber forest products in the NWT. Within a matter of days, morels and other species of wild mushrooms will have reached their prime picking season in the NWT. A large number of commercial harvesters from BC and Alberta are coming to the Deh Cho to pick mushrooms in the areas that burned during last summer's forest fires, where these mushrooms grow best.

Wild mushrooms are considered gourmet food because they cannot be cultivated and must be applicably identified and hand-picked from the places where they are found. As a result, mushroom harvest is very competitive and products fetch high prices on national and international markets.

If these mushrooms are harvested in the NWT, some of the profits should stay in the NWT. All a harvester needs right now is an NWT business

licence in order to pick and sell wild mushrooms from the NWT. Local harvesters are concerned that they will be pushed out of picking locations, especially on traditional Dehcho lands.

My constituents urge the GNWT to increase the price of business licences for out-of-territory harvesters as a way to regulate wild mushroom harvests before we get a new Forest Management Act. As Members of the Legislative Assembly, we all have a role in the creation and implementation of the acts of the NWT. When we consider the magnitude of legislation devolved in the Devolution Agreement compared to a tiny morel mushroom, the regulation of non-timber forest products should be well within our reach. A new Forest Management Act is essential as we take control of lands and resource management, expand biomass initiatives and commercial harvest of wild mushrooms, berries, syrup and other forest products.

Both the Nisga'a tribe of BC and the province of Saskatchewan regulate non-timber forest products. We need to settle the Dehcho land claim so that the Dehcho people can develop innovative tools like the Nisga'a have to manage resources on their lands. My constituents and I thank ENR and ITI for their commitment to support territorial mushroom harvesters. We ask that you further strengthen the measures we have available.

I urge government to move forward on the development of new legislation, ensure compliance with the legislation we do have, raise the cost of business licences for out-of-territory harvesters and continue to support the territorial entrepreneurs who are trying to make the best of a local resource this season. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nadli. The Member for Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ISSUES ARISING FROM IMPLEMENTATION OF DEVOLUTION LEGISLATION

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like my colleagues, I'd like to welcome everybody back to the session here today.

The Premier indicated in his sessional statement, today is the first day of our new government since devolution. An exciting time for the Northwest Territories. While I was home after spring session, everyone asked me: So, how is this going to affect us? So that was the concern from most of the public. That's the thing going on. We sit here today, we have a lot of questions, we've made our statements. Really, what has changed in the government? It's very subtle and we have a bunch of questions about how things are going to go forward.

The Premier indicated turning northern opportunities into prosperity. We are definitely looking forward to the new Northwest Territories through devolution, but we also have a bunch of questions. We're going to have a bunch of questions during this session and going forward.

The review of legislation, how is that going to be done, how is that going to be effectively done so that the public and the Northwest Territories have input on the legislation coming forward? I guess I do have some concerns over a three-month period that's mainly in the summer. I think we should be looking at a longer period of time so that people can react.

The other issues that are going forward is resource revenue sharing money. What are we going to do with that? What are we going to do with the Heritage Fund? The Premier indicated that we took over the federal jobs and I think that's a consistency that probably a lot of people don't see a lot of difference because they're the same people, the same faces, but we also created a bunch of jobs. So I'm just wondering where those jobs are, have they been filled, and I guess I'll have questions for the Premier later today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. The Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolyunny.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SPECIAL LEAVE FOR NWT CIVIL AIR SEARCH AND RESCUE TRAINING

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Volunteers in many organizations are valuable and appreciated assets who make our territory a safe and better place. So when lives are in danger, the Civil Air Search and Rescue Association, or CASARA for short, are such volunteers who are ready, willing and trained to work as spotters alongside our Royal Canadian Air Force, or military aircraft and ground vehicles. With roughly 80 members in Inuvik, Norman Wells, Hay River and Yellowknife, these CASARA NWT volunteers are nationally funded by the Department of National Defence and work in conjunction with 10 provinces and two territories with access to 375 aircraft and 2,596 certified pilots, navigators and spotters.

CASARA NWT can be tasked by the Department of National Defence, the RCMP, or a community SAO. However, most of their missions are for the RCMP throughout the Northwest Territories. In fact, to put in perspective how busy they are, there are on average six air searches on Great Slave Lake alone each year.

Although these volunteers are funded for training and operational readiness by the Department of National Defence, many of these volunteers are employees of the GNWT, and it is through my observation the GNWT could play a more integral

role to recognize the importance of these volunteers in the context of better access to training. Let me explain.

Currently, the GNWT Human Resource Manual has provision for five days per year of special leave for training for firefighters and CASARA volunteers. As generous as this may sound, most of the southern training courses for these volunteers are scheduled on weekends, so when our GNWT volunteers want to access this provision to travel on Friday and return on a Monday, they are denied. Sadly, the approval process for the special leave to attend training has been found to be inconsistent across the NWT as most GNWT managers do not allow special leave to be used for travel and only to be used for actual training days. This, unfortunately, leaves these GNWT volunteers using other leave credits or loss of earnings to travel to required course locations. Therefore, it is in the best interests for the safety of all Northerners that a simple direction be provided to the GNWT supervisors to include travel for training as part of the five-day Special Leave Policy.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. DOLYNNY: Let me be perfectly clear. This is not a request for an increase of special leave days, only a consistent application of the Human Resource Manual provision by GNWT supervisors. I can assure you if there was more consistent application of this special five-day leave, this would encourage current members to remain within Civil Air Search and Rescue and help attract new volunteers to join and strengthen this valuable contribution and the safety of our residents.

Later today I will have questions for the appropriate Minister.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. The Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
SAFETY AT HAY RIVER AND FRED HENNE
TERRITORIAL PARK BEACHES

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Hay River Territorial Park beach is a great draw for both residents and tourists, and I am pleased to see the strides that ITI is making to increase its level of safety. I would like to share some of these safety developments with you today.

A number of safety recommendations were made by the Lifesaving Society of Alberta and the Northwest Territories in the safety audit that it conducted for ITI in July of 2013. ITI will be implementing all of the water safety recommendations at both Hay River and the Fred Henne beaches this summer. Permanent lifejacket loaner stations will be in place this summer. These

stations will be available at both beaches for swimmers who are not equipped with a personal floatation device. ITI has also developed new signage with simple messaging to promote public awareness and education. Signage includes information regarding beach rules, a map of the beach, safety equipment and facility locations, as well as hazard identification and emergency contact information. An emergency phone will be installed this summer season as well as beach safety equipment such as throw bags and ring floats. The swim area will be identified with markers this summer, something that hasn't been in place for many years.

While not a recommendation of the audits, ITI is also ensuring that there will be supervision at both beaches this summer. Trained beach attendants will be on the beaches starting mid-June and remain there until Labour Day weekend. There will be two beach attendants in Hay River Territorial Park beach on duty seven days a week. These attendants will be trained in water rescue in up to 1.2 metres, aquatic emergency assistance, First Aid and CPR. The Lifesaving Society will provide training and is developing guidelines and procedures. Beach attendants will educate beach goers on safety behaviour on the beach as well as monitor the designated swimming area to ensure that children aged seven and younger are within the arm's reach of a guardian 16 years of age or older.

ITI is working in conjunction with the GNWT Drowning Prevention Group to promote public education throughout the NWT related to water safety. These initiatives, led by the Department of Health and Social Services, are not specific to territorial parks, but rather, broader-based water safety. They include public education, building community capacity, social marketing and community-based research. As an example, during Water Safety Week there will be a news release promoting water safety awareness.

We are dedicated, as a government, to creating sustainable, vibrant, safe communities, which is the goal of the 17th Legislative Assembly, and the steps we are taking now will help us reach that goal.

I would like to seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I have made reference to the Fred Henne Park, and I have made reference to the Hay River beach, and as we know, most NWT communities are located on a river or a lake. I would like to also encourage the government to further expand this initiative to promote water safety to these communities, because summer is finally here and you can be sure that kids are going to be jumping in the rivers and lakes on those hot summer days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Mr. Lafferty.

Returns to Oral Questions

RETURN TO ORAL QUESTION 287-17(5): JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I have a return to oral question asked by Ms. Bisaro on March 13, 2014, regarding junior kindergarten.

Ms. Bisaro asked about the endorsement of Aboriginal Head Start programs and use of such programs as Junior Kindergarten in the eight Northwest Territories communities where such programs operate.

I must applaud the Western Arctic Head Start Council for providing quality early childhood programming for the past 17 years in the Northwest Territories and for their contributions they have made to help children, families and communities.

The eight Aboriginal Head Start programs that operate in the NWT are funded by the Government of Canada, which is why they are able to offer free half-day programming in their communities.

In addition to federal funding, all the NWT Aboriginal Head Start programs are eligible to receive funding from the GNWT's early childhood programming. The implementation of junior kindergarten will not affect either the federal or the territorial funding that the NWT Aboriginal Head Start programs receive. They will still be able to offer the same quality, no cost half-day programming to three- and four-year-old children. Junior kindergarten is not meant to compete with Aboriginal Head Start; rather, it offers parents across the NWT another consistent choice regardless of where they live or what their economic situation is.

Although there are eight NWT Aboriginal Head Start programs operating, the fact remains that 25 communities in the Northwest Territories do not have Aboriginal Head Start. Ten communities have no licenced child care or early learning options at all. The majority of all other licenced preschool programs, daycares and family day homes are fee-based. It's difficult to find safe, affordable space for licenced early childhood programs within many of our communities.

It is the mandate of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to offer consistent programming in every community. It would not be fair to offer a free full-day program in one community but not in another.

We know the benefits of early childhood education are profound. The implementation of junior kindergarten has the potential to reach children and

families across the NWT and in communities where no early childhood programming has been available thus far. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Colleagues, before we start, I'd like to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Ms. Corin Robertson, the United Kingdom Deputy High Commissioner to Canada, from their embassy in Ottawa. Welcome to the House.

---Applause

Travelling with her today is Mr. Rupert Potter, British Consul General from Vancouver. Welcome to the Northwest Territories.

---Applause

Honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to recognize two visitors from Scotland, Pat and Jim Thom, and also I'd be remiss if I didn't recognize that Pat grew up in Yellowknife at Giant Mine townsite and some of you long-time Yellowknifers may remember her as Pat Spence. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you know, Rocher River is still part of my riding of Tu Nedhe, so I'd like to recognize my auntie Vivian Kelly, who originated from Rocher River, and also her daughter, my cousin, Linda Wood. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize two constituents with me today here in the House, Ms. Linda Wood and also Vivian Kelly. Welcome. Also, I'd like to welcome the UK Deputy High Commissioner in Ottawa, Ms. Corin Robertson and, as well, Mr. Rupert Potter based in Vancouver. He's the Consul General with the British government in Vancouver. Welcome, folks, and enjoy the rest of your visit here. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As always, it gives me great pleasure to acknowledge and welcome NWT's favorite son – and we all know who that is – Mr. Anthony W.J. Whitford. There he is. He attends hearings quite often.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to acknowledge Ms. Lydia Bardak. She's the executive director of the John Howard Society. As I understand it, right on the

side here we have Hannah Allen. She's a Page for this session and she's from Yellowknife Centre.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the last person I'd like to acknowledge in the gallery here today is Zoe Ignacio-Pacunayen. She's my constituency assistant for the summer. She's in her second year of dental hygiene down south, but I hope she makes sure she will return to the Territories to work full time. Please give her a warm welcome.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce, to you and through you, one of the residents from Range Lake. She probably doesn't need any introduction, but Ms. Carmen Moore who is from the office of protocol and she's one of our best ambassadors that I think we have in the North and, of course, our special guest. Thank you for joining us today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize the leadership from the Sahtu, specifically the Tulita leadership delegation. I'd like to recognize the grand chief and Chief Frank Andrew; president Clarence Campbell from Tulita Land and Financial Corporation; vice-president Jimmy Mendo; Sally Horassi, board member; Leon Andrew, board member; and from the Fort Norman Metis Land Corporation, Rocky Norwegian, board member; and Valerie Yakeleya, board member. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all I'd like to recognize, of course, Tony Whitford, resident of Weledeh. Welcome, Tony. I recognize other residents up there. I know Sheila Bassi-Kellett, I think I saw her up there with our special guests; Lydia; and I'd also like to recognize our distinguished visitors from Britain and also I'd like to offer a wee welcome to our Irish visitors, Pat and Jim Thom. I know Pat has a strong affiliation with Giant, which is, of course, in the Weledeh riding. Welcome.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. I'd like to welcome everybody here in the public gallery today. Thank you for taking an interest in our proceedings. Item 6, acknowledgements. Mr. Blake.

Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 7-17(5): CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF MARY KENDI

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mrs. Mary Kendi, a well-respected elder from Aklavik, passed

away in Inuvik on Monday, May 26, 2014. Mary just recently celebrated her 99th birthday.

Born on the Pokiak Channel in 1915, Mary Vittrekwa spent her early years in Aklavik, Fort McPherson and Nagwichoo Tshik, mouth of the Peel. She married Alfred Kendi in 1932 and together raised 10 children. She sewed for her family, always making sure her children had slippers and fancy footwear and they were dressed warm in winter months. Later on, taking care of her grandchildren sewing traditional parkys, mukluks, mitts, Mary took great pride in dressing her family with her sewing. Many of her works are now treasured keepsakes in the homes throughout the Delta.

She always had a home-cooked meal ready for anyone when they visited her, a sure sign that she often had people in her home or was expecting people to stop by. Mary contributed effortlessly to the Anglican Church in Aklavik; she was a member of the Women's Auxiliary and Women's Institute. Mary was one of the founding members of the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute, one of the first women in the NWT to receive the Wise Women Award. She received numerous awards throughout her lifetime, special tributes at events and gatherings. She is honoured for her many years of dedication and commitment to her community. Mary spoke strongly about the importance of young people being well educated both in today's world and the ancestors'. It was important for Mary to pass on cultural survival skills and traditional knowledge. She made our community a better place to live by being a positive role model to everyone. Mary Kendi will be forever remembered and deeply missed. Condolences to the family. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. Condolences to the Kendi family on behalf of all of us at the Assembly.

Item 7, oral questions. Mr. Menicoche.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 293-17(5): FUEL PRICES IN REMOTE COMMUNITIES

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I did a Member's statement on the increase of fuel prices in the small, remote communities that is delivered by the petroleum products division, so I would like to ask the Minister of Public Works and Services questions on the increase of fuel prices.

I'd like to ask the Minister, how are the fuel prices determined in all our small and remote communities? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. The fuel prices include the cost of the actual product being purchased, the transportation cost to get the product to the community, there's a sales commission for the sales within the community and the O and M expenses, evaporation loss and taxes. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I know it can be argued that the transportation cost to the remote communities is additional tax to these communities.

Has the department looked at not applying a transport tax so that we can lower the fuel prices into our small and remote communities? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, petroleum products operate through a revolving fund. There's a Revolving Fund Act, which means that the fund itself is self-funding. So the only way that we're able to deliver fuel to these communities is by charging what it costs to deliver fuel to the communities.

If we were to subsidize one community, which we are allowed to do up to 95 percent of the cost, we would have to take it from another community. We're allowed to charge up to 105 percent of the cost of delivering fuel to a community.

We try to keep it fairly balanced and do it at the true cost, 100 percent of the cost. So the actual transportation cost is what we use. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I'd like to thank the Minister for that explanation. To a normal person, I guess it wouldn't make sense.

I'd just like to pursue another angle. Government is providing these services in the communities and we're charging a commission fee.

Can our government provide this service for free, instead of charging it back to the smaller communities? They're small populations. They're the ones that get the brunt of it. I think my colleague from Mackenzie Delta has the highest fuel prices as a result of the petroleum products division, at \$2.01.

Can they look at the government providing the service without a commission charge? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, the sales commission is paid to individuals in the communities that sell the fuel, so we would be asking the individuals who are selling the fuel in the communities to do it for no fee if we were to eliminate the sales commission from the price structure of the fuel. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Menicoché.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I guess what I'm asking is if Public Works and Services would review how we can deliver fuel, how we can drive down the cost of living. In fact, I think nationally one of the big moves is to lobby the

federal government to drop the GST for gasoline and heating fuels in remote communities.

Is that something that the Minister is willing to look at as well? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, if that is internationally to lower the cost across the board, then our government is prepared to look at that particular tax for fuel into small communities that we're delivering ourselves. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

QUESTION 294-17(5):
GNWT MEDICAL TRAVEL POLICY
ESCORT PROVISIONS

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

I understand that the department is reviewing its Medical Travel Policy. What is the timeline for this review? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, in the last sitting I talked about the schedule for the review of the Medical Travel Policy, and we were hoping to have the base Cabinet policy ready for discussion on March 31st of this year. I did have an opportunity to get briefed by the department and go through that Cabinet policy and I didn't feel that it was quite right and it needed some additional work, so I've actually sent it back to the department.

Between that and some other competing priorities, we are a little behind. I'm hoping to have that Cabinet policy to Cabinet and then to Standing Committee on Social Programs in July. In the meantime, I've had an opportunity to travel around the North and talk to a number of people, and there are lots of individuals who are obviously frustrated about medical travel, in particular escorts.

In our discussions on the medical travel review, I had indicated that once we had the Cabinet policy done, then we would work on the individual portions: escorts, appeal process, price. Recognizing that there is this delay and we won't be ready until July, I've asked the department to expedite the review of the escorts policy in light of situations like the Member has discussed. We will be going out for an RFP immediately to seek input and provide some direction and to find some options to deal with the escort portion of medical travel. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BLAKE: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my statement, my constituent was given a support letter from her doctor, and then once it came to medical travel it was denied.

I'd like to know why was she denied a medical escort after being approved earlier?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I'm not comfortable talking about specific individuals, but with respect to the Medical Travel Policy, a recommendation can come from the practitioner. But when it comes to non-medical escorts, there are some guidelines and not all non-medical escorts are approved.

This is clearly an area that needs improvement. We have heard from residents all across the Northwest Territories, that when you're dealing with chronic conditions like cancer or other issues, you need emotional, compassionate support, and non-medical escorts needs to be reviewed. This is going to be included in the review that's going to be conducted once the RFP goes out, and I'm hoping that we can take some immediate action on addressing non-medical as well as medical escorts.

The RFP, as I said, will be out early this summer and we should have something to have discussions with committee by the end of the summer/early fall. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BLAKE: Can the Minister describe what is being done for medical travel situations in the interim, before the final recommendations of the review? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, there is always an exception process that individuals can access if they feel that they've been declined medical travel. It's not always going to be exactly what the Members want or what the individual residents want, but we do try to meet their challenges and the issues that are coming forward, and we are attempting to find solutions for individuals on non-medical escorts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we are waiting for the review and revision of the Medical Travel Policy, will the Minister make an exception in this case?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I'm not prepared to talk about an individual case, but I'd be happy to sit down with the Member and we can look at the file and see what we can do to resolve this particular situation.

In the end, the Minister doesn't make decisions on medical travel. There is a policy and a process. It's just a matter of finding the appropriate way through the process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

QUESTION 295-17(5):
GNWT MEDICAL TRAVEL POLICY
ESCORT PROVISIONS

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've wanted to tag team with my colleague from the Mackenzie Delta on this issue of medical escorts, especially paid escorts from our small communities. When I returned back to Yellowknife, I met a constituent in Deline that talked about him going out with an elder to escort the elder out, but the elder is going to be in the hospital for about a month or so and he said I just can't afford to stay with him for a month or so. We need to do something with the medical escorts, so I'm glad that Mr. Blake is raising it today.

I wanted to ask the Minister, between the RFP and the reviews and the feedback, committee work, in between that is there any type of interim solution? This person is going to go out next week. Can he seek some type of formal financial compensation, because he's away from his job, his community, he has family obligations in his community, which he does not see anything now?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, I'm not comfortable talking about a specific individual, but we do have a Medical Travel Policy, it is under review. In the future it will address the types of situations the Member is discussing. I'd be happy to sit down with the Member and talk about this particular situation and get the details and have the department get involved, but this is part and parcel with many of the concerns that we're hearing about medical travel and in particular around escorts and non-medical escorts. This is work that we need to get done. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: I do appreciate that the Minister is working hard in this area. This individual I talk about could be anybody in the Northwest Territories. So let's talk generalities because I know the issue I am talking about. I haven't given you names. I've just said a person in Deline. I could be talking about someone in Good Hope or wherever.

So I want to continue the discussion. This could be Tulita, it could be Tuktoyaktuk, it could be Tsiigehtchic or wherever. We have people who are leaving their communities, who have family obligations, who have jobs, who, out of the goodness of their hearts, are escorting people to facilities where they have to stay for a long time without any type of financial compensation. They are asking their land corps., their bands to cover their costs for fuel, groceries or whatever. These people are staying months, weeks.

So, given all that the Minister is telling me, is there any type of interim solution to help these medical escorts to come with their people to the hospitals?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: On the Medical Travel Policy now, there is a per diem that is provided. It may not be sufficient enough to cover some of the costs that the Member is talking about, but I know that communities throughout the Northwest Territories have stood up and have been supporting members of their communities when they are away for extended periods of time.

During my discussions with residents across the Northwest Territories and with Members, we've heard a lot of suggestions on escorts and what we need to be doing. I've heard individuals say we need to actually create or employ some dedicated escorts in the communities who could be the escorts for everybody, proper language training, proper interpretation training and some medical terminology. I've also heard greater fees for individuals who are on medical travel. I've also heard people say that these are really bad ideas and that other options need to be considered. The bottom line is there are a lot of ideas and we need to wade through these ideas and find out which ones are really practical and feasible.

In the interim, I would still encourage the Members to work with their communities, to maybe have conversations with income support and we will continue to provide per diems accordingly. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: What I am hoping from this Minister is saying yes, let's look at some out-of-the-box type of solutions. I'm really happy the Minister talked about possibly income support. Can the Minister sit down with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to say listen, we have an issue here because of the bureaucracy, because of the timetable, we just aren't able to meet the current needs right now of what's happening. The issue is medical escorts that need to be compensated by people in the communities. It's okay here in Yellowknife, you can drive your car and head over there, but from the small communities you're travelling away from your family, you have family obligations, you have children, you have bills. They have to get paid.

I like what the Minister said. Can we do that in the interim to look at this? We need to help our people now. The government is here to help them, we get the money to help them. Can we help them in this area so that there is a less stressful burden on the people who are already helping people with medical escorts? That's what I'm looking for from this government. We can deal with the letter writing later on, but let's just get some help right now.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I agree with the Member completely. We need to think outside the box and I'm certainly happy to have some

conversations with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, who is responsible for income support. I don't know if that will work. I don't know what mechanisms might exist, but I'm certainly willing to have that conversation and that discussion with him. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister commit to the House before the end of this session that the conversation has been had with the Minister, we're looking at options, again, what can we do within the session here? I'm looking for some support, some direction, so when we go back to our communities we can say yes, the government will look at this. This is for all my communities in the Sahtu that there will be some compensation when medical escorts are asked, you know. That's the type of support I'm looking for. I really don't know. Maybe if I was on the other side I would have some suggestions and sit with the Minister. But can we do something like that?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I will commit to having a conversation with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, but it would be impossible for me to commit to finding a solution within a seven-day session. So we will have the conversation, we will explore any opportunities that exist and I will keep the Member informed. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

QUESTION 296-17(5):
FUNDING FOR YELLOWKNIFE
EDUCATION AUTHORITIES

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I would like to start by noting that board budgets are being cut while boards are being asked to deliver even more services to students. A recent study by the NWT Teachers' Association, entitled "Understanding Teacher Workloads, A Pan-Northern Teacher's Time Diary Study" underscores how teachers are becoming so overloaded with new duties that their opportunity to educate is reduced.

Can the Minister ensure the House that the findings of this study are being considered and that school boards will have the resources they need to deliver the right level of education that the students of the NWT deserve? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Rolling out the junior kindergarten across the Northwest Territories, as I committed, starting this

fall, Phase I, next year Phase II, the following year will be Phase III, and I met with the board chairs and superintendents just May 13th, I believe, two weeks ago. I did hear them and I wanted to hear their perspective and due to the fact, I've made some changes, I've made some commitments where delivering is optional starting this fall. So all of those 29 communities will have the option of delivering that in their communities and also providing half-time as opposed to full-time.

So those are a couple of ideas that came forward and I've listened and I've committed to it. Some of the areas that the Member is alluding to are cutbacks. When you look at the overall funding, there's been a low enrolment in several schools. Due to that fact, part of the process will be the board will have to decide on where those impacts will be. Our contribution is based on enrolment, but as part of a long-term solution, we are looking at school formula funding as part of the Education Renewal Innovation.

So those are the discussions that we are currently having with the board chairs. Mahsi.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for the response from the Minister. It sounds like there's some progress being made there and I appreciate that. His choice of the word "commitment," I might use the word "edict," and I appreciate the fact that he's backing off on edicts and starting to listen here and respond.

In the Yellowknife school boards, I hear from a teacher, for example, that with the cuts that are planned – and there has been no backing off from those that I've heard about – his class sizes will go from 28 to 33, to 33 to 40. That's off the chart. People want to know how this government can reduce the funding to Yellowknife school boards, add 120 students and also maintain pupil-teacher ratios. Mahsi.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Yesterday I met with the two board chairs of Yellowknife, YK 1 and the Catholic School Board. Both chairs aired their concerns and issues and brought some ideas to me to work with. Resulting from the meeting, obviously, is that we have two different numbers. We have our departmental, based on enrolment projected numbers, and they have their numbers. What has been produced in, of course, the media is kind of misleading. This is the information that we need to gather. We need to sit down. Both parties committed, and as we speak, the Catholic School Board, I believe, is meeting with my senior staff within my department, and the next day, tomorrow, will be YK 1, so we can compile the actual facts, the numbers that we can share with the general public. Those are some of the areas that we will continue to push forward. I did make a commitment that my staff will be meeting with them, so that's what's happening right now.

MR. BROMLEY: That is a significant commitment that the Minister has made here, and I appreciate learning about that today. I think it's good that the two entities get together and explain their numbers and come up on agreement with what the numbers are. I will expect that will reduce class sizes. If it doesn't, we've still got some work to do.

As a rule of thumb, though, demand for implementing new programs should be backed by new ECE funding. Yet, Yellowknife school boards are laying off teachers and staff because ECE is taking money away right now to provide junior kindergarten in the smaller communities and now at a reduced rate, so maybe there's some relief in sight. But ECE is requiring JK in all NWT schools within a couple years, including in Yellowknife in 2016, so what assurances can the Minister give to Yellowknife school boards that new funding to implement junior kindergarten in their schools will be forthcoming, not just replacing some of the money that they're taking away this year and next?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I am very pleased to announce that as of this past Friday, May 23, I have been informed that 22 smaller community schools have committed to offering junior kindergarten in communities starting this fall, out of 29. The following years will be the remaining regional centres and also Yellowknife. When I met with the board chairs, we talked about that. We talked about the PTR. There is additional funding that is going to the school board. That's why I said we're working with them. We're working with the finance directors so we can gather the facts. With the numbers that have been shared the last couple of weeks, it is not accurate information anymore. We have the actual numbers, the true numbers that we need to share with them. Based on that, it will reflect changes of the numbers that have been addressed in the media.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I didn't hear the positive response I'm looking for there. I heard a repetition there. The funding formula at ECE has what the Yellowknife school boards state, that the budgets for their operation will be funded at 80 percent of the GNWT estimates and 20 percent by the local taxpayers. The Minister subscribes to this. He has said this in letters. The teachers of Yellowknife deserve the same pensions as all other teachers in the NWT. If not, please explain that.

Why is the Minister not willing to apply the government's own funding formula to the pensions of teachers in Yellowknife while not hesitating to pay 100 percent of costs for teachers throughout the rest of the Northwest Territories, and I would note, we're just talking about the incremental amount, 80 percent of the incremental amount here now to bring the pensions up to a fair level?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: From JK to pension. This is an area that two DEAs, in their choice, very different from the rest of NWT education authorities. They are very independent employers and negotiated directly with their own bargaining units when they negotiated a few years back. They also own their own schools, and they are the only education authorities in the territory that can raise their own revenue through school taxes.

As independent employers, both YK1 and YCS are responsible for planning any financial implications that flow from the decision to agree to a new pension cost to ensure that they are consistent with delivery of educational programming across Yellowknife. The GNWT has no role in or responsibility for the YK1 or YCS collective bargaining process or the implementation of the collective agreements. GNWT respects and supports the desire of the YK school boards to operate at a greater degree of independence and their responsibility.

Those are some of the incidents that are undertaken with the negotiation of their agreement. We were not part of that.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

QUESTION 297-17(5):
ADJUSTMENTS TO
NORTHERN LIVING ALLOWANCES

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Human Resources. It's going to reflect on the Member's statement I made earlier in terms of the northern living allowance. I'd like to ask the Minister, first and foremost, the question that we know that negotiations between the GNWT and the Union of Northern Workers is done on an annual basis, and whether or not the negotiations are positive or negative or they're even concluded to, so I want to ask the Minister of Human Resources if the northern living allowance rates for the 2014-2015 year were not agreed to, would the rates have stayed the same as 2013-2014?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. The Minister responsible for Human Resources, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a negotiated item, as the Member indicated. A negotiated item between the northern union workers and the Government of the Northwest Territories. It's based on a methodology of comparing costs to Yellowknife. It's based on transportation and the cost of living components. As we get the consumer price index and the cost of transportation, using the methodology predetermined between the union and the

Government of the Northwest Territories, we set the northern living allowance.

MR. MOSES: I do know the answer that the Minister has given; it was also something that I had stated in my Member's statement earlier today. I asked the question if it was not agreed to. When you're going to negotiations, both parties need to agree on the end product, so the GNWT seeing, when they look at some of these numbers, we have four communities who have lost over \$1,000, decreased over \$1,000, and in one community in the case decreased by \$2,628. That's almost two paycheques for somebody that might be in a low-level paying job.

I'd like to ask the Minister, again, if these were not agreed to, would the rates have stayed the same as the previous year of 2013-2014, and why was it not red flagged when we see these numbers?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: I should have been clearer in my response. I apologize for that. What I was indicating was that it is a negotiated item, so it was agreed to. The methodology was agreed to and it's been left up to the Government of the Northwest Territories to do the annual adjustments. The northern living allowance was not an item that was on the negotiating table. The last time we negotiated an agreement with the Union of Northern Workers, they felt that they were more interested in the salary portion of it, the increase in the salaries, and they were satisfied with how the northern living allowance was being paid out, and they were satisfied with the methodology, which we are continuing to apply. If the union, which we are going to be going back to the table at the next agreement, indicates to us that yes they definitely want to renegotiate the northern living allowance or the methodology that we're using such as adding other components to the cost of northern living, then that is something that would go into the negotiation mandate from them and we would respond accordingly. Thank you.

MR. MOSES: I want to speak to the community of Inuvik and the decrease in \$383. Although it's lower than most of the other communities that decreased, coming from Inuvik, we know the utilities are a lot higher than what they were in previous years and that \$383 does help out the middle-income family. That's two weeks of groceries right there, or even paying utilities. We've got residents who are going on payment plans to pay utilities, yet we are decreasing the northern living allowance in those communities. I did ask the Minister why this was not red flagged and not agree until something could be adjusted in these negotiations.

Obviously, when we look at Section 41.(7) of the Public Services Act, I'd like to ask the Minister, will amendments be made to this section of the act to adjust such things as the high cost of fuel, as mentioned earlier by some of my colleagues, in the

smaller communities and have that adjusted? Are amendments going to be forthcoming to this act, specifically to section 41.(7) of the Public Services Act? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: There are no planned amendments to that specific section of the Public Services Act, the section that indicates that the Collective Agreement will not deal directly or indirectly with any payments that relate to owner occupied rent space. Anything to do with the cost of housing is not a part of this agreement, so there is no plan to amend that. We are bringing the Public Services Act forward for a couple of minor amendments at this time. If committee wishes to expand upon the review of the Public Services Act, I am sure the department would be willing to have that discussion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Short, final supplementary, Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister whether or not there is anything this government can do right now to go back to the table and renegotiate the rights that came out of the 2014-2015 northern living allowances in Inuvik. The \$383 decrease did bring a lot of people's concerns forward to my office. I know that's only \$383 and there are smaller communities with higher decreases. I can't imagine what they're going through right now.

Is there anything we can do to go back to the table and revisit this, renegotiate the 2014-2015 northern living allowance rates of the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: As I indicated to the Member, I am sure that if the northern union wanted to put this on the table the next time around, it would be something that government would certainly discuss. At this time there's a pre-determined agreement on the methodology that we've applied. We've applied the methodology to 22 of the 34 communities that are under this agreement and have increased. So we must recognize that this was a give and take and that there are some increases and some decreases. I also recognize that the cost is high, but this is something again that was pre-determined, agreed to the methodology. So I'm sure the northern union is listening to our debate and if they want to put that on the table as one of the items in the negotiating mandate, then GNWT again would be prepared to talk about that item as well. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

QUESTION 298-17(5):
ADVERTISING GNWT
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are addressed to the Minister of Human Resources. I want to follow up on my Member's statement. On October 1st of 2013, some eight months ago, we had a grand change in the way that we advertise for GNWT jobs. We weren't going to advertise specific jobs any more, we were going to have generic ads, people had to have an e-mail address and they could apply online, and so on and so on. It was a grand improvement, we were told.

I'd like to know from the Minister, if it was such a great improvement, why the change that we're now seeing in the newspapers in the North? What happened that we went back to some of the new and some of the old? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some of the positions would be advertised in the paper. There were a lot of issues coming from some of the smaller communities that indicated they were having difficulty with e-recruitment. We recognized that we have a system where we have indicated to individuals that we would be posting jobs in various places throughout the small communities and offices, municipal governments, with government service workers, with career development officers and so on. But even at that point, there were still some requests to advertise some of the jobs back in the paper, so we've made some provisions for some special jobs back in the paper, but not at increased costs. We're still with the idea that we had originally asked all people that we interview, where and how they had obtained the job ad to apply for the job. Only 3 percent of the people were getting their advertisements from the paper, so that was the reason for the original cutback. But the reason for the slight change is just to try to reach everyone that we intend to reach. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister for that response. I know this is why we went to the one big ad, having people access jobs online and so on. I'm pleased that there's been a recognition that obviously some jobs need to be advertised specifically.

The Minister mentioned that there's been no increased cost to have what I'm seeing as twice the amount of ads that we had before, so I'm finding that very difficult to understand.

Can he explain to me how we have gone from one ad and now we have one ad and sometimes six others? How is that not an increase in our advertising costs? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, the department was seeing the cost of advertising escalating every year. Since we've gone to this system in October, we are able to stabilize the cost and we are within that cost and we're not increasing the budget to add on some of the jobs. This is something that was discussed between our department and the papers.

Right now a lot of what we're doing with advertising, we're doing a lot of generic advertising. All the departments are cost-sharing, so we're getting economies of scale on that. So that's one of the ways that we're bringing the costs down in that area in order to pay for specific ads that may go into the paper that's needed. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. If I understand this correctly, as of October 1st the cost for our ads went down because we were placing fewer ads. So from a year ago, so I guess from the 1st of April of 2013 to the 1st of October of 2013, we had a cost for ads. After October 1st our cost went down. So now, if I understand the Minister correctly, he's telling me we've increased the number of ads, so that presumably has increased our cost, but we haven't gone over the cost that we incurred as of April 1st of 2013. Is that right?

So, we reduced our cost in October; now we've cranked it back up, but we haven't gone over last year's total, so that's good. Is that right? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I don't have all of the cost breakdowns of all the types of advertising that we're doing. Our initial intent was to do a couple of things. One was to contain the cost of advertising and also not spend a lot of money on advertising that was not being used. Like I indicated, only 3 percent of the ads that were in the paper were the reasons that individuals were applying. So this is what we've managed to do. We've managed to maintain the cost. We're not increasing the cost of advertising across the board, but we are making some special provisions to make sure that we're reaching people who are indicating to us that were not able to see the ads. They can see the general, generic advertisement in the paper but aren't able to access it online. In those cases, we are doing that without increasing our overall cost. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Final, short supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister, I think. I guess I would like to ask the Minister if he could provide some kind of analysis of the numbers of what the costs were prior to going to the big online ads and what we're now incurring in terms of cost.

The Minister mentioned that there was reason for the changes, that we weren't reaching a certain number of people. What kind of analysis was done

by the department before they made the change to put job-specific ads in there? Who did they speak to? What kind of consultation or analysis was done? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The only analysis that was done was to determine where people are getting their ads from in order to fill out their applications and apply for a specific job, and the answer was that only 3 percent was coming from the paper. So that is essentially the analysis. It was more that we looked at the cost of advertising. A lot of the cost was in print advertising in the paper for specific jobs, and only 3 percent of the people recruited had actually received their advertisement through the paper and applied because of what they saw in the paper. That was the analysis done.

Also, I am prepared to provide a cost comparison of what was there before October 1st, what has happened since October 1st, and if we had done specific job advertising, the cost of that as well. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 299-17(5):
AVAILABILITY TO ANSWER QUESTIONS
DURING MARCH SESSION

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today will be to seek information on a statement made in the House by the Premier on Thursday, March 13, 2014. To provide context to that, the Minister of MACA told me personally that he would be leaving on Thursday, March 13th, which is a session day, so he could go home and gas his truck up on his way to Whitehorse as he goes to the Arctic Winter Games. So I draw the House's attention to page 5 and I quote the Premier in Hansard: "I wish to advise Members that the Honourable R.C. McLeod will be absent from the House today to attend to a personal matter."

My question to Minister R.C. McLeod as Minister of MACA is: Is it to find that doing your duty by gassing up your truck so you can drive to Whitehorse, is it clear execution of your duties and responsibilities as a Minister to this House when you're to be here, ready and able to answer questions of Members? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister R.C. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. No end to the surprises from the Member.

I did go back to Inuvik, gassed up my truck, drove down to Whitehorse on my way to Fairbanks to attend the Arctic Winter Games. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, on page 32 and 33 of the House of Commons Procedures and Practices it says that in terms of ministerial

responsibilities, Ministers have both the individual and collective responsibilities to the House, and as such, Ministers are expected to take responsibility and defend their decisions and all Cabinet decisions.

My question for Minister R.C. McLeod is: How does he reasonably expect to do this if he's, as he stated earlier, not in the House, travelling on personal business?

MR. SPEAKER: Order! Minister of MACA, Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure what the Member is trying to prove, but I was representing the Government of the Northwest Territories at an international event and I stand by that statement. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, Members had questions for the Department of MACA and I'm asking the Minister the fact that the Alaska games were several days after that particular day in question, so he could have reasonably been there. So I'm asking the question to the Minister: How does he make himself reasonably responsible and available to Members of this House so that we can ask pertinent questions? This has been stated on the record by the Premier. I'm just asking, how do we do our job if he doesn't come to work? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, it was going to take me a while to get to Fairbanks and the Member had five weeks prior to ask the Minister of MACA questions. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: No problem, Mr. Speaker. It's a Member's privilege to ask a question when they choose to. It's a Minister's responsibility to be available for the question when the question is asked, so don't make it my fault.

My last question, of course, to the Minister is: What are we going to do about this particular situation that he's not coming to work? What type of responsibility, being available to Members so we can ask questions that are important to the constituency? I'd like to understand what will be done. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I had been here for five weeks prior and I'm not saying when the Members can or cannot ask questions, but the Member's MO, as has been demonstrated in the past, is to ask questions of a Minister he knows is not here. I had gone to the Arctic Winter Games...

---Interjection

MR. SPEAKER: The Member has called a point of order. Mr. Hawkins.

POINT OF ORDER

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I draw the attention of 23(i), imputes false or hidden motives of other MLAs. Mr. Speaker, he just made a clear accusation to me that my MO is about asking questions to Ministers who are not available. That is imputing false motives on the way I'm doing my job. That's the issue at hand here. I think there's a point of order and he should apologize for it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I'm not going to allow any debate. I'll get back to the House on that point of order.

Thank you, colleagues. I will allow the Minister to reply on that point of order.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is taking offence to the comments that I made by telling the truth, I will withdraw that comment and apologize. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Apology. Okay, oral questions. I'm not allowing any debate on the point of order. Mrs. Groenewegen, a point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, I'm not really sure what this is under, but I mean I didn't know that we could stand up and ask Ministers in this House about things that are not within their purview as their department. I mean, Mr. McLeod is the Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs. I don't think that his personal attendance in this House or where he was on any given day is within the purview of his department. I think the question is out of order. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the point of order, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't believe Mrs. Groenewegen respectfully has a point of order. I think it was more of a statement, as she just said here a second ago. The reality here is I'm asking the Minister about their office and their ability to do their responsibilities that fall within them.

I won't go at further length, but I will remind Members I just read a statement from page 32 and 33 of the House of Commons Procedures and Policy Manual and it does speak to the fact that they have to be accountable to Members and they have a responsibility to do that, and you cannot do that if you're not here. Thank you.

SPEAKER'S RULING

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. First of all to that point of order, I'm going to settle the first point of order. There is no point of order. The

Minister was travelling on his duty as a Member to do his job to represent us in Alaska.

On the second point of order, Mrs. Groenewegen.

---Interjection

MR. SPEAKER: Okay. To the point of order. To the second point of order. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll try not to get these points of order confused here, but what we have is a questioning of the integrity of a Minister who has duties outside this House, who was on legitimate government business, representing us at an international event, that he was driving, and while I haven't personally made that drive, I know it takes a considerable amount of time. I think the questioning of the integrity of the Minister that somehow he was out of this House for false pretenses is not really constructive. It is a point of order and Minister McLeod acted with the full knowledge of this House and the authority from Cabinet and the Premier. So it's an unfortunate line of questioning that I think has already sort of coloured the early days of this session. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. To the point of order, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to be given an opportunity because I did forget to mention earlier that it is the normal practice of the Cabinet to inform all Members of the absence of a Minister. I have inquired through our process and channels to see if that was that ever given. We were never given notice that this particular Minister would be absent from the House, hence not being prepared to be able to ask and certainly get the answers to the question.

As for the other aspect of travelling on duty, I'm going to say that I have a different perspective on that, especially because when the Premier says, "I wish to inform Members of this House, R.C. McLeod will be absent from the House today to attend personal matters," not work-related matters, not responsibility or duties of the House, but he said "personal matters." So, hence my line of questioning about being responsible and able to ask questions in the House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Hawkins, I already drew judgment on that first point of order and Mr. McLeod did apologize to the House and he is travelling on duty as a Member in his position. To the second point of order, that's what we were talking about on Mrs. Groenewegen. So I should have cut Mr. Miltenberger off at the time, but now on the second point of order, Mrs. Groenewegen, that's what we're speaking on.

For the first point of order, there is no point of order. He did apologize to the House. Mr. Bromley, to the second point of order.

MR. BROMLEY: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for that. I think there has been some confusion here and I believe the first point of order was taken care of. That's my understanding.

I'm speaking to the point that Mrs. Groenewegen has raised. I do believe that all Members of the House have a role in bringing accountability and for every Member to show up to the best of their ability and so on. If that requires asking questions respectfully, there should be an opportunity to do that.

So I just wanted to make sure that there is agreement that accountability is part of our role, as long as we do it respectfully and so on. I would expect that the Ministers would be able to respond to questions on accountability very well. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The Minister did respond very well. To the second point of order, Mrs. Groenewegen, would you like to speak to it?

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, I just didn't know that we could stand up in the House and start asking Members across the floor about where they were and what they were doing. I could understand perhaps if there was a concern that maybe the Premier might be asked a question, but I didn't know we could stand up and ask questions that are out there that do not relate to the matters or the mandate of the department. I mean, this is a very personal question. This is a personal question about Minister McLeod's whereabouts when the House was sitting. I may be wrong, Mr. Speaker, and if I am I apologize, but I normally have been of the understanding that we can stand up and ask questions about what these Members oversee in their mandate and in their role as Ministers of departments and we could talk about those things that were within their knowledge under that purview, but to ask personal questions about their whereabouts, I just don't think this is the forum for it. I could be wrong, and if I am I apologize. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Under which rule in regard to the question came in under, but at the end of the day the line of questioning really quickly, it is a line of questioning that is privy for the Member. So on the second point of order, I will advise you, there's, no, the ruling number, Mrs. Groenewegen, okay. So thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the most polite, respectful manner, I'm not sure we have a point of order because we don't even know what infraction it made. So I'm just going to leave it at that, I'm not going to go at length. Thank you.

SPEAKER'S RULING

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. There's no point of order. I just want to remind the Members it's good to be back...

---Laughter

...and see that everybody is ready to do their work. So where were we? The Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

QUESTION 300-17(5):

WILD MUSHROOM HARVEST REGULATION

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is in regard to accountability and I want to know who is accountable for the tiny morel mushrooms.

---Laughter

So my question is to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. I just became aware recently, to be quite honest, in terms of the significance of mushrooms. I wasn't very aware. I knew they existed and I have actually personally seen them in the bush when you walk through the bush and come across these small vegetative growths on the ground and sometimes you find them in trees. I didn't understand their significance until recently.

Of course, in that exercise in finding out the significance of the mushrooms, there is a growing interest in terms of their monetary value, and recently there have been discussions on another form of mushrooms, which is chakra that grows on trees.

Because of the growing interest and need for some interim steps so that the department regulates and manages perhaps the onslaught of people that might come up to the NWT, my question to the Minister is: Can the Minister explain what his department has achieved in addressing the motion since it was passed in March 2014? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nadli. The Minister of ENR, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a government, we have been aware of this issue now for some time. It was brought up in this House, if I recollect, very clearly in the last government. There was a commitment made that once the Wildlife Act was passed that we would be moving on to the Forestry Act. It is outdated and right now does not give us legal authority to manage things like the morel mushrooms. We recognize that.

At the same time, we've worked with the communities, we've worked with ITI, ITI has been providing business support to the Member's constituents and we as a department have been working with the communities to try to make sure that the pickers that come in from out of territory at

least have a business licence and that they are complying with all the local laws of the land. At this point that type of coordinated effort is what we are doing as we look at coming forward with a legislative proposal to modernize and update and redo the Forestry Act. Thank you.

MR. NADLI: I'd like to thank the Minister for working with communities in terms of trying to get a handle in terms of the growing interest in these mushrooms that grow abundantly in the wild and especially this time of the year.

In developing the interim measures, can the Minister state to the House who was consulted in coming to the interim measure that have been put in place at this point? Mahsi.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: As we've dealt with this issue, it has evolved over the years. The morel mushrooms tend to follow the season after the fire season. So as fires have come and gone across the Northwest Territories, the issue of morel mushrooms has come up in the South Slave, outside of Yellowknife, in the Member's constituency, and we've been looking at ways to try to deal with and make sure we can manage within the incoming of significant numbers of pickers, given the amount of morel mushrooms. But it is a very transient, intense industry that's tied to the brief lifespan of the morel mushrooms. We've been working with communities. The Member himself has been very active in writing to the department, to myself, to Minister Ramsay at ITI, so we've been working collectively over the years with the MLAs, with the various regions and centres, Fort Smith, Yellowknife, wherever the issues have come up. In this case now in Fort Providence, to see how we could best manage this as we try to improve the arsenal, we have tools available to deal with this issue in the most effective way possible.

MR. NADLI: Part of the measures that have been put in place is a price, and I want to ask the Minister what is the cost of a business licence for mushroom harvesters and how were those rates determined?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I don't have that exact figure or the process for setting the rates for business licences. I will talk to the Minister of ITI and I will commit to get that information for the Member.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger, final short supplementary, Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the Minister for his reply and, of course, working with communities. I know some have predicted, especially people that work in, of course, predicting the weather. They have indicated that it could be a hot, dry season this year, and of course, the department is also equally responsible for forest fire management, but with this tiny little morel that grows in the wild, I mean, are we ready in terms of

managing and monitoring and regulating perhaps the transient people that might come up North?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We will continue to deal with the issue of more harvesters as we have in the past, recognizing that it's work and a process that needs improving, which we are embarking on, and we will continue to work with the Member and with other communities where this issue comes, depending on where the fires are, and what happens with the more harvest itself. Right now we have to deal with the tools we have, but we are committed to improving our ability to regulate that particular transient industry.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The Member for Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard.

QUESTION 301-17(5):
PUBLIC REVIEW OF
DEVOLUTION LEGISLATION

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my statement I talked about the exciting first day of session and under the new regime of devolution. My questions today will be for the Premier of the Northwest Territories. He has indicated that a public review of the devolution legislation will begin, and he has indicated a website, but I'm just wondering: can the Premier elaborate on how this public consultation will happen on the review of devolution legislation?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We started even before devolution came into effect, by a public information campaign so that the people in the public could understand what devolution was all about. We've activated the website. We put information in all the newspapers with regard to devolution. We have an interactive website now where we will be asking the public to correspond with, and we will be collecting all of that information with the objective of having it in place in the fall. Then we expect it will take about a month to gather all of the feedback that we get through the website, and then we would report back to the committees and to the Assembly. We also will be working with the committees on this review.

MR. BOUCHARD: I guess my next question is about the timing. The Premier indicated that he was going to be working with committee, but we are going into a summer session and we won't be here for the summertime until we come back in the fall. I'm just wondering about the timing and would the department or the government look at extending that time so that it comes into the fall when most of the Assembly comes back as well as most of the people in the Northwest Territories go on the land and go have their kids away from school. So the focus is definitely not on politics.

Would the government look at extending that to a six-month period maybe until Christmastime, so they would get full consultation with the public?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Like the Member, we want to make sure we have a very thorough, transparent review of the devolution legislation, so we'd be quite prepared to extend the review to whatever period of time would be seen to be appropriate; December or even later to the next year, keeping in mind that the longer we extend, the more we get into transitional arrangements. But I think to be very thorough and transparent, we would be prepared to do that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BOUCHARD: The Premier indicated that they are doing a survey of the website. I wonder if there is going to be any consultation, like any public meetings. I know the assemblies are coming forward in the summertime.

Are we planning to have some meetings in the different communities throughout the Northwest Territories to get public feedback that way?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We will want to look at that. We attend all of the annual assemblies. To make sure we have a thorough and transparent process, we will take that into consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The next question I had was about devolution and the new positions. We've taken on some federal positions, but we've also created. I'm just wondering what the update is on those positions.

Have we hired all those people? Are we 50 percent complete? For the new positions we created for devolution, have we hired everybody? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We've created 206 new territorial government jobs to provide for devolution, and as of May 6th there were 60 vacant positions. Now that we're near the end of May, I expect the majority of those jobs have been filled, but I will commit to reviewing the numbers again and provide the information to the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolyunny.

QUESTION 302-17(5):
SPECIAL LEAVE FOR NWT CIVIL AIR
SEARCH AND RESCUE TRAINING

MR. DOLYUNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I indicated in my Member's statement we had an inconsistent application of our human resource five-day special leave provision for our civil air search and rescue and firefighter GNWT volunteers. More specifically, most of the required

southern training for these volunteers occurs on weekends. So when these GNWT volunteers want to access special leave days for travel on a Friday and return on a Monday, they are denied by their supervisor. Currently, Mr. Speaker, that travel is not explicitly included in the five-day special leave, and it is within this context I wish to address the Minister of Human Resources.

Can the Minister indicate to the House why his department would not consider allowing travel to attend required training courses as part of the five-day special leave provision within our Human Resources Policy? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. The honourable Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The special leave provision is part of the negotiations between the union and the Government of the Northwest Territories. If the leave, as laid out in the Human Resource Manual for firefighters and the CASARA people is a special leave, as the Member indicated, they would be following what is negotiated within the policy within the special leave requirements. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: The GNWT Human Resource Manual also has a list of various boards where GNWT employees, if appointed or elected, may access special leave for travel to attend meetings as part of their duties. Sadly, CASARA NWT board members are not on such a list.

Can the Minister indicate why CASARA NWT board members are not included and would the Minister consider such an addition? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: As I indicated, it's something that is negotiated. If the individuals, the members of the public service that are with firefighters and CASARA wish to be on that list, then that's something that we would look at in discussions with the union the next time our negotiation mandates are developed. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Upon further analysis, it was evident that even the GNWT volunteer firefighters face similar hurdles when accessing special leave days to maintain their professional qualifications. This begs me to ask: how many other volunteer groups out there who contribute to the safety and security of our residents are affected with this inconsistent policy?

Can the Minister indicate to the House how he and his department will address this shortcoming? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, I am currently looking into a specific request from the Inuvik group, with the idea of coming up with a solution that is satisfactory to this group and also

the firefighters, as they are captured within the same section. So this is what we're doing.

It sounds to me, just on the value of what we're talking about right here, that it is important individuals playing an important role and that the Government of the Northwest Territories should do all they can to try to support both of these groups. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I finally want to go into a last question here, and I'm a bit perplexed. We've heard from the Minister today that he might look into this and that the policy might be reviewed in the next negotiation. We're asking here today that the policy be looked at for its integrity. I believe we need to go a bit further in addressing our GNWT volunteer base who specialize in our safety and security.

Will the Minister commit to a proper review of all human resource policies applicable to these volunteers, to ensure that we are maximizing the strength of these volunteers as a valuable NWT resource? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we can look in the Human Resource Manual to review all of the provisions for individuals such as these two groups and other important volunteers that do work for the people of the Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Ms. Langlois.

Returns To Written Questions

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 11-17(5): PREVALENCE OF 'SUPERBUG' BACTERIAL INFECTIONS

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Langlois): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am in receipt of a return to written question from the Honourable Glen Abernethy, Minister of Health and Social Services, asked by Mr. Dolynny on February 24, 2014, regarding the prevalence of "superbug" bacterial infections.

Rates are reported for cases of antibiotic resistant organisms (AROs) for the entire NWT population (per population) and not limited to hospitalized patients. Due to small figures, rates are reported per 1,000 population as the denominator rather than 10,000 population. Additionally, a regional breakdown of the number of cases is provided only for MRSA. This is because the incidence of the other AROs was too low for the rates to be presented per authority.

Note that there have not been any reported cases of Carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae,

Acinetobacter, or Pseudomonas for the years in question. It should also be noted that Extended Spectrum Beta Lactamase are primarily E. coli organisms but also include selected Klebsiella and Enterobacter species.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table a document titled "Prevalence of Superbug Bacterial Infections" outlining the total number of cases per 1,000 patients for AROs from 2005-2013 and the regional breakdown for the number of cases of MRSA per 1,000 patients from 2005-2013.

**RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 12-17(5):
HOUSEKEEPING CLEANING BUDGETS
IN NWT HEALTH CARE FACILITIES**

Mr. Speaker, I am in receipt of a return to written question from the Honourable Glen Abernethy, Minister of Health and Social Services, to Mr. Dolynny, a question asked February 24, 2014, regarding housekeeping cleaning budgets in NWT health care facilities.

Housekeeping budgets are tracked by each health and social services authority (HSSA) per fiscal year and are not broken down by facility or patient room. As such, budgets encompass the individual HSSA as a whole, which includes all regional health care facilities as well as administrative and office space. Please note that Stanton Territorial Health Authority (STHA) and the Beaufort-Delta HSSA (BDHSSA) have some housekeeping services privately contracted. This is reflected in their budget calculations. Additionally, the budgets for the Yellowknife, Sahtu and Dehcho HSSAs and the Tlicho Community Services Agency (TCSA) only reflect housekeeping supplies.

Housekeeping cleaning dollars per in-patient visit cannot be accurately calculated as the budgets are not broken down by facility or in-patient visit.

Furthermore, health care facility cleaning time is not tracked by in-patient visits, as cleaning of the entire facility is ongoing throughout the day.

Staff turnover rates are tracked by HSSA, not by facility. Furthermore, staff turnover rates are only available from 2009-10. Rates for STHA are not available, as all housekeeping services are contracted. Rates for BDHSSA only reflect those for in-house housekeeping.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table a document titled "Housekeeping Cleaning Budgets in the NWT Health Care Facilities" outlining the total dollar amount for HSSA housekeeping cleaning expenditures from 2005-06 through 2013-14 and staff turnover rates in housekeeping for each HSSA from 2009-10 through 2013-14.

**RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 14-17(5):
MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS
ACTION PLAN**

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question from the Honourable Glen Abernethy, Minister of Health and Social Services, to a question asked by Mr. Dolynny on February 25, 2014, regarding the Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan.

Beginning in 2014-15 the Department of Health and Social Services will access the \$900,000 in new funding for on-the-land programming. The \$900,000 will be combined with new funding received in 2013-14 for a total budget of \$1.2 million. Based on the evaluation of three pilot projects implemented in partnership with Aboriginal groups, in 2013-14 final program design will be completed. Funds will be allocated to interested Aboriginal governments to support partnerships for on-the-land healing programs.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table the document titled "Mental Health and Addictions Financial Summary" containing the information requested for residents who have or are receiving addictions treatment at Poundmaker's, Aventa, Fresh Start and Edgewood, in addition to the complete investment breakdown in support of the Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan in 2014-15.

**RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 15-17(5):
COMPLIANCE WITH
INCOME SUPPORT GUIDELINES**

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question from the Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, to a question asked by Mr. Bromley on March 12, 2014, regarding compliance with income support guidelines.

Mr. Bromley asked the first question of five as follows: "What is current ECE policy regarding income support clients who fail to comply with ECE guidelines? Specifically, what is the policy around "cutting off" income support to clients as a way to enforce compliance?"

Under Section 16 of the Income Assistance Regulations, there are nine reasons where a client services officer (CSO) shall terminate income assistance (IA). The IA Regulations state that:

16. (1) Every officer shall terminate assistance to a recipient and in the case of a family of recipients for which one application was filled under section 3, the officer shall terminate assistance to all other recipients in that family

(a) the recipient has the means available to maintain himself or herself and his or her dependents adequately;

(a.1) the recipient refuses or neglects to utilize all the financial resources that he or she may access including but not limited to employment, unemployment or disability benefits or, subject to subsection (1.1), pension benefits;

(b) the recipient refuses or ceases to participate in an activity or program recommended by an officer under section 13.1 unless exempted under subsection 13.1(5);

(c) the recipient refuses or neglects to provide the officer with any information that is required in order to determine the financial resources and other circumstances of the recipient that may affect the amount of assistance provided to the recipient;

(d) the recipient obtains employment resulting in earnings adequate to meet the needs of himself or herself and his or her family, but assistance may be continued until receipt of his or her first paycheque;

(d.1) the director is satisfied that the recipient has made a false or misleading statement for the purpose of obtaining assistance for himself or herself or any other person;

(d.2) the recipient voluntarily leaves employment without just cause as set out in paragraph 29(c) of the Employment Insurance Act (Canada);

(d.3) the recipient's employment is terminated by his or her employer for just cause; or

(e) subject to subsection (2), the recipient leaves the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Bromley's second question is as follows: "In the last three years, how many income support clients have been cut off from income support, for how long and for what reasons?"

Mr. Speaker, to answer this question, later today, at the appropriate time, I will table "Income Assistance Refusal Reasons by Fiscal Year," which details the number of IA recipients who were issued a refusal of benefits, the reason and length of refusal over the three previous fiscal years.

The third question that Mr. Bromley asked is as follows: "In the last three years, how many income support clients who were cut off had children in their care?"

Mr. Speaker, in the 2011-12 fiscal year, the department received 19,365 applications for IA. Of those applications, 1,825 refusals were issued. Of those refusals, 738 or 4 percent of the total applications for IA were issued to clients who had children in their care.

In the 2012-13 fiscal year, the department receive 19,050 applications for IA. Of those applications, 1,585 refusals were issued. Of those refusals, 644 or 3 percent of the total applications for IA were issued to clients who had children in their care.

In the 2013-14 fiscal year, the department receive 19,376 applications for IA. Of those applications,

1,414 refusals were issued. Of those refusals, 578 or 3 percent of the total applications for IA were issued to clients who had children in their care.

For his fourth question, Mr. Bromley asked the following: "In the last three years, how many single parents were cut off from income support for failing to take their ex-partner to court to seek child support payments?"

Mr. Speaker, in the 2011-12 fiscal year, a total of 19,365 applications for IA were received. Of those applications, 1,825 refusals were issued. Of those refusals, two were refused for failing to seek child support payments.

In the 2012-13 fiscal year, a total of 1,050 applications for IA were received. Of those applications, 1,585 refusals were issued. Of those refusals, two were refused for failing to seek child support payments.

In the 2013-14 fiscal year, a total of 19,376 applications for IA were received. Of those applications, 1,414 refusals were issued. Of those refusals, none were refused for failing to seek child support payments.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, for his last question Mr. Bromley asked the following: "For comparison, in the last three years how many clients of income support have managed to rise far enough out of poverty that they no longer required income support for at least one year?"

To address this question I must point out that when an individual no longer receives IA they are no longer clients of the IA Program and the department thus does not track there post-IA income or personal economic situation. Individuals may no longer be receiving IA for a variety of reasons including better employment or because they have left the territory and so on.

We do encourage clients to make productive choices when they are on IA. Productive choices are a key component of the IA Program and are intended to empower northern residents to participate in opportunities in their community, such as education or training programs, or the wage economy.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 16-17(5): 17TH ASSEMBLY DIRECT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to a written question from the Honourable Robert McLeod, Premier, to a question asked by Mr. Hawkins on March 12, 2014, regarding direct appointments. Mr. Hawkins asked for a list of all direct appointments made by the Cabinet of the 17th Assembly, noting the employee's name, position, community, date of appointment and employing departments.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise this House that the Cabinet of the 17th Assembly has

recommended 250 individual direct appointments from the beginning of this term to the date of the Member's question.

Of the 250 recommended appointees, 89 percent of the candidates qualified as affirmative action candidates under the Affirmative Action Policy.

Twenty-one of the direct appointments are term appointments to positions in the Ministers' offices which will expire after the next general election. Ten of the 250 appointments were to deputy minister of associate deputy minister positions and six were to administrative positions supporting specific deputy ministers.

Mr. Speaker, later today, at the appropriate time, I will table information on the remaining 213 appointments. Information on these appointments is organized by department and indicates the factors considered, as per the publicly released Executive Council Guidelines for Submissions Recommending Direct Appointments for each appointment. However, Mr. Speaker, the information will not identify the appointees by name, position or community. The government has determined that disclosing the names of individuals recommended for appointment, or information that could easily be used to identify those individuals would constitute unreasonable invasion to privacy under our Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Clerk. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Mr. Moses.

Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills

BILL 24: AN ACT TO AMEND THE STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ACT

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Social Programs has completed its review of Bill 24, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act. The committee wishes to report that Bill 24 is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. Item 14, tabling of documents. Mr. Abernethy.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 78-17(5): PREVALENCE OF "SUPERBUG" BACTERIAL INFECTIONS

TABLED DOCUMENT 79-17(5): HOUSEKEEPING IN NWT HEALTH FACILITIES

TABLED DOCUMENT 80-17(5): MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS FINANCIAL SUMMARY

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, further to my Return to Written Questions 11-17(5), 12-17(5) and 14-17(5) I wish to table the following three documents, entitled "Prevalence of "Superbug" Bacterial Infections," "Housekeeping in NWT Health Facilities," and "Mental Health and Addictions Financial Summary." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Lafferty.

TABLED DOCUMENT 81-17(5): INCOME ASSISTANCE REFUSAL REASONS BY FISCAL YEAR

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Further to my Return to Written Question 15-17(5) I wish to table the following document, entitled "Income Assistance Refusal Reasons by Fiscal Year." Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

TABLED DOCUMENT 82-17(5): OTHER DIRECT APPOINTMENTS PRIOR TO MARCH 12, 2014

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, further to my Return to Written Question 16-17(5) I wish to table the following document, entitled "Other Direct Appointments Prior to March 12, 2014." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

TABLED DOCUMENT 83-17(5): 2014 REVIEW OF MEMBERS' COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Pursuant to Section 35.1(3) of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I hereby table the 2014 review of Members' compensation and benefits prepared by the independent commission to review Members' compensation and benefits, dated March 31, 2014.

Ms. Langlois.

TABLED DOCUMENT 84-17(5):
RESPONSE TO PETITION 1-17(5):
LIFEGUARD SERVICES AT
FRED HENNE PARK BEACH

TABLED DOCUMENT 85-17(5):
RESPONSE TO PETITION 2-17(5):
CLIMATE AND ENERGY ACTION PLAN

TABLED DOCUMENT 86-17(5):
RESPONSE TO PETITION 3-17(5):
REFERRAL OF HYDRAULIC
FRACTURING APPLICATIONS

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Langlois): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a response to petition provided by the Honourable David Ramsay, Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, in response to a petition tabled by Mr. Robert Hawkins on March 7, 2014.

I would like to table a response to petition provided by the Honourable J. Michael Miltenberger, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, in response to a petition tabled by Mr. Bob Bromley on March 7, 2014.

I would like to table a response to petition provided by the Honourable J. Michael Miltenberger, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, in response to a petition tabled by Mr. Bob Bromley on March 12, 2014. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Clerk. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I request unanimous consent to return to item 5.

---Unanimous consent granted

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize two members of the best negotiating team for transboundary water negotiations in the country: the lead negotiator, Merrell-Ann Phare; and one of the best scientists in the country, Dr. Erin Kelly, who works for the Government of the Northwest Territories and just concluded some negotiations with BC today. They are part of the best team, so I'd like to welcome them to the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to welcome Mr. Darrell Beaulieu, the chair of the Business Development Investment Corporation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Trevor Teed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Mr. Bouchard.

Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 26:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
ELECTIONS AND PLEBISCITES ACT

MR. BOUCHARD: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, May 30, 2014, I will move that Bill 26, An Act to Amend Elections and Plebiscites Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Mr. Ramsay.

BILL 27:
MISCELLANEOUS STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 2014

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, May 30, 2014, I will move that Bill 27, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2014, be read for the first time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Item 21, report of Committee of the Whole. Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Blake.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 18:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ACT

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I feel I have to speak on the bill again. I have spent a lot of time talking about Bill 18, a bill that is going to do nothing more than consolidate a portion of the Weledeh riding to the Tu Nedhe riding, combine the two ridings together. I don't know if the small

community riding is now joined in with the Yellowknife riding or if they're taking the traditional riding of Yellowknife out and joining it with a small community riding outside of Yellowknife.

I would like to read a bit of what the elders parliamentarian Ms. Violet Beaulieu has presented during the Elders Parliament. I felt that what she said in here was something that the people truly felt in Tu Nedhe. I would also like to speak on the fact that the only people who were affected by this bill were the people of YK Dene and the people of Tu Nedhe being in Fort Resolution and Lutselk'e.

After all the review, all the travel, all the meetings across the Northwest Territories by the Electoral Boundaries Commission, the only change was to consolidate two ridings, two small ridings at the opposition of both and all of those people in those ridings.

In those ridings, when the Electoral Boundaries Commission travelled to those ridings, they came out and clearly indicated that they were in opposition. Obviously, the report indicates that other ridings were not in opposition of this specific recommendation because they were not affected.

Mr. Speaker, this is about amending the electoral districts, and what the elder had read was something that I felt was very good, so I'm going to go over that again.

There's a bill before the Legislative Assembly to join Tu Nedhe to be part of the riding of Weledeh, joining the YK Dene into a new riding. The residents of Tu Nedhe do not support the change for several reasons. The residents of Fort Resolution and Lutselk'e speak a different language than the group in YK Dene. By combining the two Aboriginal groups, we will lose a culture and a language of one of the groups. So there is no possibility that the Wiilideh language and the Chipewyan language could be represented in this House in one riding ever into the future. There is very little possibility that any other riding would elect somebody that was Chipewyan or somebody that spoke the Wiilideh language. There's only one MLA coming out of that riding; therefore, the only other possibility was for somebody to be trilingual in order to speak both of those languages, which I guess is a possibility, but a difficult task.

The elder goes on to say, as a long-term resident of Fort Resolution, I feel our concerns on poverty and lack of jobs in small communities, small, remote communities are different than the concerns of people living right next door to the capital city in the Northwest Territories. We have very different issues from people living in Yellowknife.

The rate of employment in Yellowknife is high and very low in small communities of Fort Resolution and Lutselk'e. In our small, remote communities, we have social and economic issues, things like

lack of good housing, high rates of addictions, low education levels that must be dealt with by our MLA on a regular basis.

The present riding of Tu Nedhe has the second largest geographical riding in the Northwest Territories of all ridings. Some of the elders say our land and our people cannot be separated. This is still our ancestral homeland. What we do is collective. If we have a consensus government, then this Assembly must accommodate our unique, indigenous structures. There are good examples all over the world where colonizers have left us with a model to follow. We have had our own riding for 40 years and we must continue to keep our own riding. We have the right to own a seat in the Legislative Assembly and a right to have our language spoken in this Assembly.

I know there are rules that govern how many people in the riding and what size the average riding should be, but we live in a very remote part of the country and deal with isolation and challenges of travelling long distances between communities.

There are many areas in Canada – Nunavut, Yukon, Labrador, Prince Edward Island – where people are considered to be overrepresented. There are special circumstances where overrepresentation is necessary, and I think to protect the culture and language of the Tu Nedhe people, it is necessary to keep the riding as is.

Finally, constitutionally the government must consult and accommodate our people and ask the government to respect our wishes under Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, this was made by the elder parliamentarians here this spring, somebody who represented a respected elder who was here to represent the people of Tu Nedhe.

In addition, I feel that this Assembly should recognize the people of Weledeh and have a riding that is not dominated by the people of Weledeh, so the people of Weledeh also have a voice in the Assembly. As it stands, this Assembly is contemplating combining two Aboriginal groups, like I said, and essentially eliminating the Weledeh people from having a seat here in Yellowknife.

I supported the solution that gave one seat to Yellowknife, which is off the table and one seat to the people of the Tlicho, the people of Monfwi. They needed more representation and we're asking for people at this Assembly to not accept this bill and go back to the status quo. The only change that this bill makes, is a change that is opposed by all people, the only people that are affected, I cannot see why this Assembly would agree to make that change. It doesn't impact anyone else. It impacts only one area, and all people in that area are opposed to it, everyone. Everyone I spoke to in YK Dene, amongst the people at Detah, the people in

Ndilo, the people in Lutselk'e and the people in Fort Resolution are all opposed to it. They do not think this is a good idea. They want to have representation in the House. We have several official languages which leaves our official languages in the Northwest Territories, and how this Assembly could contemplate eliminating the possibility of having one of those official languages in the House is beyond me. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. I apologize for earlier. Anyone who would like to speak to Bill 18... Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I would like to have a recorded vote.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. To Bill 18, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. [English translation not provided.]

...and it should be recognized and it should be recorded, but unfortunately, when we are dealing with the third reading of this particular bill, it's a huge bill. It has implication on the riding that is going to be amalgamated with another language, another community, and obviously, I am not going to elaborate even further, because we've talked about this on numerous occasions, the 15th Assembly, the 17th Assembly, and then another one in the 19th Assembly. We have over almost 40 percent of our 25 percent margin. We're way beyond that, almost double. The 19th Assembly, it will be around 50 percent. At that time are we going to start accepting that we need additional seats for the Tlicho region.

I'm certainly hoping that I'm recorded in the Tlicho language because I spoke of the value of why we're here today. There are only four people that speak the official languages. I spoke of their names earlier. More than likely we may lose a language, the Chipewyan language in this House, due to the fact of the changes. Yes, I understand that it's going to Yellowknife, Detah, Ndilo, and we're going to have another Tlicho language in here. But at the same time, I certainly don't want to lose one of the official languages.

At the end of the day, a decision has to be made, but I must enforce that we have to keep those in mind where the language, we're losing our language. As it's been indicated in Gwich'in, we're losing the Gwich'in languages and other languages across the Northwest Territories, and here we're talking about Bill 18, addition of two seats, where the motion that came down for second reading, there's no support to move forward on that, but there is the support to change the 19 seating with amalgamating the Tu Nedhe riding. I don't support that. I don't support this motion that's coming forward, Bill 18. I will continue to stress that. I've

talked to my elders, my leaders, in my language. It's important to talk to the kids in our language, as well, so that's what I've done, and I will continue to do so to represent my constituency in this building and as we move forward. But at the same time, this bill that's before us, I cannot support it as it is presented. I feel that it should be 21 seats. Those are just some of the discussions I wanted to have to make my point across speaking in the Tlicho language.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. To Bill 18, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm speaking, also, against this bill. I want to back up some of the points that I've heard already raised on the floor today. It deserves repeating that the people of Weledeh, the people of Tu Nedhe, the representative of Weledeh and the representative of Tu Nedhe disagree with this, and those are the people that are being affected here.

Fundamentally, even before this decision is finalized, it's out of date. We know that ridings are already above the 25 percent guideline. Data that was used is now out of date because some ridings are growing rapidly. It took only 28 people to raise the Weledeh riding above the 25 percent guideline, and anybody who takes a drive up there sees the amount of construction, the amount of homes and apartment blocks that have opened since those initial data were collected.

The same thing is happening now in Kam Lake, and we know that most of the Yellowknife ridings are within about 35 or 40 people of overcoming the 25 percent guideline. Weledeh is 42 percent above the expected number that should be in a riding. There is no question that needs adjustment, but that can be applied to all of Yellowknife and it can certainly be applied to Monfwi, as we've heard. That has been going on for three Assemblies.

To me, this is completely unacceptable. This is even a bit colonial to start doing these things without regard to what we know or is actually happening on the ground. Making decisions on data that is out of date and we know is out of date and not addressing the fundamental issues and the democratic guidelines. So here we are, we seem to be again disregarding the will of the people and disregarding the guidelines. We know we are already outside of those guidelines and we haven't even implemented, yet when it comes into effect, we are going to be way out of this.

So, again, this is unacceptable to me. It's unfair that it's already out of date and I'm kind of embarrassed that we're making decisions knowing that these things are true. So I will leave it at that.

Many things have been said before, but daily this is becoming more true. Daily we are getting further beyond the guidelines that were established for the

country and we're not applying them. We don't necessarily have to apply them extremely strictly, but generally we are way out for quite a number of ridings now and quite a significant proportion of the people of the Northwest Territories. We're talking about 60 percent or more of the Northwest Territories. So that seems to me beyond the camp. On that basis, I don't think we should go forward with this legislation.

It's tough. It means back to the drawing board, but at least we would have a clear opportunity to get it right, and I think we would all feel more comfortable for doing that. Thanks very much for this opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe that perhaps before, when we had this debate, I was in the chair of Committee of the Whole. I just want to briefly say that I concur with what my colleague from Weledeh has just expressed. The premise for this particular plan that is contained in this bill is wrong. The premise is wrong. The data is wrong and we don't want to take the time to get it right.

I have been here before. I have been here when we've done the Electoral Boundaries Commission before and came in, like I said, it was a swing vote, and told Yellowknife we aren't going to give them one more Member. We went to court and ended up giving them three, from four to seven.

So I just want to say, let the record show and mark my words today that if we go ahead with what is proposed in this bill, we are going to live to regret it very, very soon. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

RECORDED VOTE

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. A recorded vote has been requested. All those in favour, please stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Langlois): Mr. Blake, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. McLeod – Yellowknife South, Mr. Ramsay, Mr. McLeod – Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Nadli, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Moses, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed, please stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Langlois): Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Lafferty, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Dolynny, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. SPEAKER: All those abstaining, please stand.

Results of the vote are 11 in favour, seven opposed, no abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 18 has had third reading. Madam Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Langlois): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, orders of the day for Thursday, May 29, 2014, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Acknowledgements
8. Oral Questions
9. Written Questions
10. Returns to Written Questions
11. Replies to Opening Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, May 29th, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:18 p.m.

